

EC Directive 92/43 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora

Citation for Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Name: Burnham Beeches
Unitary Authority/County: Buckinghamshire
SAC status: Designated on 1 April 2005
Grid reference: SU949855
SAC EU code: UK0030034
Area (ha): 382.76
Component SSSI: Burnham Beeches SSSI

Site description:

Burnham Beeches occupies an extensive area of the Burnham Plateau where Thames gravels and underlying Reading Beds give rise to acid soils, supporting mature and developing woodland, old coppice, scrub and heath. The site contains an extensive area of former beech *Fagus sylvatica* wood-pasture with many old pollards and associated beech and oak *Quercus* spp. high forest. It is one of the richest sites for dead-wood (saproxylic) invertebrates in the UK and it also retains important epiphytic communities, including the moss *Zygodon forsteri*.

Holly *Ilex aquifolium* and honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum* are the main components of the shrub layer of the woodlands, and bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* and brambles *Rubus fruticosus* agg. frequently dominate the ground flora, but in places these are lacking and the woodland floor may bear no more than scattered patches of wavy hair-grass *Deschampsia flexuosa* and cushions of the distinctive moss *Leucobryum glaucum*.

The site also supports an extensive area of acid mire with several locally uncommon plants including bog pimpernel *Anagallis tenella*, marsh St. John's wort *Hypericum elodes* and royal fern *Osmunda regalis*.

Qualifying habitats: The site is designated under **article 4(4)** of the Directive (92/43/EEC) as it hosts the following habitats listed in Annex I:

- Atlantic acidophilous beech forests with *Ilex* and sometimes also *Taxus* in the shrublayer (*Quercion robori-petraeae* or *Ilici-Fagenion*). (Beech forests on acid soils)

This citation relates to a site entered in the Register of European Sites for Great Britain.

Register reference number: UK0030034

Date of registration: 14 June 2005

Signed: *Trevor Salmon*

On behalf of the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs